

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What has changed from the last Performance Evaluation cycle?**

- A.** Several changes have been introduced this Performance Evaluation cycle:
- a. All Performance Plans must now be written using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Sensitive) Formula
  - b. All Performance Plans must now be written to the "3" level which denotes "good" performance or meets the expected performance standards
  - c. Full-time Executive Service employees in your agency are required to be part of the Performance Evaluation cycle and must have a completed Performance Plan by June 30, 2012.

**Q. What has not changed from the last Performance Evaluation cycle?**

- A.** Employees still receive a Job Performance Plan (Performance Plan), two Interim Reviews and a Formal Evaluation. The rating scale also remains the same – 1(unacceptable), 2 (marginal), 3 (good), 4 (superior), and 5 (exceptional).

**Q. What is the purpose of a performance evaluation?**

- A.** Performance evaluations should be a balanced assessment of an employee's performance as it relates to stated expected performance standards. It is an open communication between the employee and supervisor that should happen throughout the year to avoid surprises, not just when the performance evaluation is due. Ideally, performance should align with the agency's goals and those of the organization/State.

Specifically, the formal performance evaluation should include conversations about and documentation of a review of the employee's performance over the last year against expected performance standards for the entire evaluation cycle.

**Q. What is the Evaluation Period for the Performance Evaluation cycle?**

- A.** The evaluation should cover your performance related to your current Performance Plan for the period of July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013. However, keep in mind that all employees must have a completed Performance Plan no later than June 30, 2012.

**Q. When does the evaluation cycle begin?**

- A.** The performance evaluation cycle for 2012-2013, begins July 1, 2012.

**Q. When does the evaluation cycle end?**

- A.** The performance evaluation cycle for 2012-2013, ends with the final Formal Evaluation due on or before June 30, 2013.

**Q. When will I receive my Performance Plan?**

- A.** All employees must have a completed Performance Plan no later than June 30, 2012.

**Q. When will I be evaluated?**

- A.** Employees must receive a Formal Evaluation of their performance prior to the cycle-end due date of June 30, 2013. The evaluation may be completed up to 90 days prior to the due date.

**Q. How do I know which form(s) I should be using during the Performance Evaluation cycle?**

**A.** Forms you will be using during the Performance Evaluation cycle may include: The Job Performance Plan form, Interim Review form, Annual Performance Evaluation form, Probationary Evaluation form and the Flex Probationary Evaluation form. For guidance on which forms to use for a specific employee's classification, please contact your agency's Human Resources Office.

**Q. Where do I find the forms I need to use during the Performance Evaluation cycle?**

**A.** All forms for the Performance Evaluation program may be found, along with other useful information, at the following link:

<http://www.tn.gov/dohr/employees/performance/perform.html>.

Forms you will be using during the Performance Evaluation cycle may include: Job Performance Plan form, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Interim Review forms, Annual Performance Evaluation form, Probationary Evaluation form and the Flex Probationary Evaluation form.

**Q. Do I use Edison to record Executive Service employees Performance Plans?**

**A.** No. As Edison is not currently set to record Performance Evaluations for Executive Service employees, Performance Plans will be completed as paper documents.

**Q. What forms do I use for the Executive Service employees that are not completed or entered into Edison?**

**A.** The OmniForm Job Performance Plan form is now available on the DOHR web site at <http://www.tn.gov/dohr/employees/performance/perform.html>. Supervisors may complete the OmniForm on-line, save the Performance Plan form, and then print the OmniForm. Or, supervisors may print the blank OmniForm Performance Plan form and complete the paper document. We will provide further instructions for the processing of the Formal Performance Evaluations for Executive Service employees at a later date.

**Q. What does SMART stand for?**

**A.** The SMART Formula acronym stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Sensitive.

**Q. Who must have a SMART Performance Plan?**

**A.** All employees, both executive service and career employees are included in the Performance Evaluation program and require a SMART Performance Plan, two Interim Reviews and a Formal Evaluation.

**Q. At what performance level are expectations written in the Performance Plans?**

**A.** Expected performance standards in the Performance Plans are written at the "good" or "3" level. A rating of "3" denotes an employee who is meeting the expectations of the job.

**Q. How many Interim Reviews are required?**

**A.** A minimum of two interim reviews are required for each evaluation cycle. Of course, if more are needed, they may certainly be added. A supervisor may add more review periods if necessary.

**Q. How soon after the Performance Plan must I wait until I conduct the first Interim Review?**

**A.** The first Interim Review may not be conducted for at least 30 days from the performance planning discussion to allow the employee the opportunity to perform to the expected performance standards and for the manager to observe the performance.

**Q. Can the Performance Plan be completed at the same time as the Interim Review?**

**A. No.** Ideally, the evaluation cycle will cover a 12-month period and must include a performance planning discussion, two interims and the formal evaluation. However, there may be times when a shorter timeframe is required. For example, an employee may be given a new job assignment or have change in supervision. In these situations, all procedural steps are still required but they may occur in a shortened time span of no less than 90 days. In all cases, the first interim may not occur within 30 days of the performance planning discussion.

**Q. Can the last Interim Review be completed along with the formal evaluation?**

**A. No.** Ideally, the evaluation cycle will cover a 12-month period and must include a performance planning discussion, two interims and the formal evaluation. However, there may be times when a shorter timeframe is required. For example, an employee may be given a new job assignment or have a change in supervision. In these situations, all procedural steps are still required but they may occur in a shortened time span of no less than 90 days. In all cases, the second Interim Review may not occur within 30 days of the Formal Evaluation.

**Q. Are evaluations done by just the supervisor, or by others?**

**A.** A supervisor is responsible for meeting with the employee to discuss the Performance Plan, the two Interim Reviews and also the final Formal Performance Evaluation. However, the supervisor is encouraged to seek input from others that the employee may interact with or support in performing his/her job duties. Additionally, the employee's second level supervisor must approve the Performance Plan and the Formal Evaluation. The Appointing Authority must also approve the Formal Evaluation.

**Q. What if supervisory assignment changes during the course of the evaluation period? Who is responsible for conducting the employee's evaluation?**

**A.** The employee's current supervisor should conduct the evaluation if the employee has been under their supervision for no less than 90 days and within this time the supervisor has completed all of the procedural steps of the program. The procedural steps of the PE program are a performance planning discussion with the employee along with two interim reviews and a formal evaluation. The last interim review must be conducted at least 30 days prior to the Formal Evaluation to allow the employee sufficient time to perform to the expected performance standards and for the manager to observe the performance.

**Q. What if an employee disagrees with the supervisor's evaluation of expected performance?**

**A.** The evaluation is the supervisor's assessment of the prior year's performance. The employee may type comments into Edison or write comments on a paper form prior to signing the paper evaluation. However, the employee's signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the evaluation; but simply that it has been provided to and discussed with the employee. For more information, supervisors and employees may contact the agency's Human Resources office to discuss further if needed.

**Q. What does the supervisor do after the appointing authority or designee sign off approving the final Performance Evaluation?**

**A.** After the appointing authority has approved the formal evaluation document, it is imperative that the supervisor (designated Rater) go back into Edison and "complete" the Performance Evaluation to close it for the cycle. The data in Edison is a metric that each supervisor and agency is being held accountable to complete. The timing of the completion process impacts many factors such as the metrics, the potential for timely merit increases, and the State's overall goal of achieving a higher level of customer service.

**Q. How are the performance evaluation results/reports used?**

**A.** Evaluation results and reports are used to provide a formal record of employee performance for a specific period of time. This record may provide support for various performance related administrative actions affecting the employee such as determining promotions, demotions, transfers, dismissals, reduction in force and salary adjustments.

**Q. Who is the contact for additional questions regarding the Performance Evaluation cycle process?**

**A.** For an employee, the first point of contact for questions regarding the Performance Evaluation cycle is your immediate Supervisor. For a supervisor, the first point of contact for questions regarding the Performance Evaluation cycle is your agency's Human Resources Officer or Performance Evaluation Coordinator.